

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HEW-04 SS-15 NSCE-00 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 AGRE-00 AID-05 EB-08 IO-13 COME-00
TRSE-00 HA-05 SP-02 SSO-00 INRE-00 ICAE-00 DODE-00
OMB-01 /083 W
-----038990 011831Z /64
O 011721Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5880

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SPOP
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL
PROBLEMS - POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION

REF: STATE 107370

SUMMARY: THE DECLINE IN FOOD PRODUCTION IS A CENTRAL
FACTOR IN PORTUGAL'S BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DIFFICULTIES,
AND IN THE OVERALL UNDER-DEVELOPMENT OF THE RURAL AREAS
OF THE COUNTRY. EMBASSY AND AID OFFICIALS HAVE HAD A
SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOP, PARTICULARLY IN

RELATIONSHIP TO THE PL 480 TITLE I PROGRAM AND AGRI-
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES UNDER OUR AID PROGRAM. THE RESULT
IS SLOW BUT DEFINITE PROGRESS ON THE PART OF THE GOP
TO MOUNT A MEANINGFUL AGRICULTUREAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.
U.S. SUPPORT -- PARTICULARLY THROUGH PL 480 -- WILL BE AN
ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT TO CONTINUED PROGRESS. FAMILY PLANNING
PROGRAM AND ASSISTANCE ARE ALSO BEING DISCUSSED IN THE
CONTEXT OF OUR AID PROGRAM IN HEALTH. END SUMMARY.

1. FOOD PRODUCTION HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY AFFECTED IN
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PORTUGAL BY THE 1974 REVOLUTION AND THE DEEP STRUCTURAL
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGES WHICH RESULTED. THE COST OF
AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS IN 1970 WAS 9.5 BILLION ESCUDOS
RISING TO 28 BILLION ESCUDOS OR ABOUT 15 1/2 PER CENT OF
TOTAL IMPORTS IN 1977.

2. IN GENERAL, THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT HAD UNTIL

RECENTLY DONE FAIRLY LITTLE TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY TO HELP MODIFY THE DISCOURAGING TRENDS IN FOOD PRODUCTION. FOR THE PAST 2 1/2 YEARS, THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE HAS BEEN ALMOST TOTALLY PREOCCUPIED WITH THE ILLEGAL LAND SEIZURES BY THE COMMUNISTS IN THE GRAIN PRODUCING AREAS OF THE SOUTH AND HAS DEVOTED LITTLE ATTENTION TO LONGER-TERM INVESTMENT PROGRAMS.

3. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNTRY TEAM HAVE HAD CONTINUOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FINANCE AND AGRICULTURE REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE THE U.S. ATTACHES TO A MORE ENERGETIC ATTACK ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY. WE STATED THAT IT WAS OF CONCERN NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF OUR GENERAL INTEREST IN PORTUGUESE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT WAS A KEY FACTOR IN THE IMMEDIATE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEMS WHICH WE AND OTHER WESTERN DONORS WERE ASKED TO HELP ADDRESS. WE STATED THAT WHILE THE U.S. CONTINUED TO SUPPORT PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENT, WE COULD NOT JUSTIFY CONTINUED PL 480 ASSISTANCE WITHOUT AT LEAST SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE PROCEEDS GENERATED WOULD BE INCREASINGLY PROGRAMMED TO COMPLEMENT THE GOP'S OWN INVESTMENT BUDGET IN A SENSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

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4. THE RESULTS OF THESE DISCUSSIONS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN ENCOURAGING AND DETAILS ON THE STATE OF GOP PLANNING ARE REPORTED IN A SEPARATE CABLE. IN GENERAL, THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT HAS BEGUN DECENTRALIZING AGRICULTURAL SERVICES TO EIGHT REGIONAL DIRECTORATES AND HAS DEVELOPED PRODUCTION TARGETS FOR THE MAJOR CROPS IN THE INDIVIDUAL REGIONS. THE REGIONAL DIRECTORATES ARE NOW RESPONSIBLE TO WORK UP ACTION PROGRAMS FOR FINANCING BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. IF THIS EFFORT IS CARRIED THROUGH, THIS WILL BE THE FIRST TIME THAT THE GOP HAS USED PL 480 FUNDS AND ITS OWN BUDGETED RESOURCES TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE PRODUCTION PROGRAMS. WE MUST EMPHASIZE THAT THIS IS A VERY FIRST STEP BY THE GOP AND DRAMATIC RESULTS CANNOT BE EXPECTED OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS. IT IS, HOWEVER, IF CONTINUED, A MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL BREAKTHROUGH AND THE MISSION INTENDS TO USE ITS PL 480 RESOURCES TO ENCOURAGE THIS TREND TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT.

5. IT IS ESSENTIAL, THAT A VERY SIZABLE PROGRAM OF PL 480 BE CONTINUED HERE OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS PRECISELY TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THIS

EFFORT. OUR AID MISSION AS WELL AS OTHERS ON THE COUNTRY TEAM ARE IN WEEKLY CONVERSATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE TO SUPPORT THESE EFFORTS THROUGH OTHER AID FUNDS AVAILABLE. A CONTRACT WITH A CONSORTIUM OF U.S. AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES IS PLANNED FOR LATER IN 1978 TO DEVELOP PORTUGAL'S RUDIMENTARY AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS. A CONTRACT ALREADY EXISTS BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND AND THE UNIVERSITY OF THE AZORES FOR A SIMILAR PURPOSE. OTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS ARE BEING PROGRAMMED FOR TRAINING AND CONSULTANTS IN AGRICULTURE TO SUPPORT PROGRAMS UNDERWAY INCLUDING THOSE FINANCED BY THE WORLD BANK.

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TRSE-00 HA-05 SP-02 SSO-00 INRE-00 ICAE-00 DODE-00
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6. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN, POPULATION GROWTH, IS A LESS OBVIOUS BUT EXTREMELY IMPORTANT SOCIAL PROBLEM. THE PATTERN OF POPULATION GROWTH IN PORTUGAL (0.8 PERCENT IN THE 1970-75 PERIOD) IS MORE SIMILAR TO THAT OF OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES THAN TO THE RUNAWAY GROWTH PREVALENT IN MANY LDCS. HOWEVER, WITH THE RECENT REDUCTION IN PORTUGAL'S TRADITIONALLY HIGH EMIGRATION RATE AND WITH THE RETURN OF APPROXIMATELY 700,000 REFUGEES FROM THE FORMER COLONIES, POPULATION PRESSURE IS BEING INCREASINGLY FELT. FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES ARE SPORADICALLY AVAILABLE IN THE URBAN AREAS BUT ARE STILL ALMOST COMPLETELY LACKING IN RURAL AREAS. THE GOP IS TAKING SOME VERY DIFFICULT STEPS TO INITIATE A NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE WITH FAMILY PLANNING AS A PROMINENT PART OF SUCH A SERVICE. THE U.S. HAS PROGRAMMED APPROXIMATELY \$500 THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE HEALTH AREA INCLUDING

FAMILY PLANNING. PARTICIPANTS HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN THE U.S. AND CONSULTANTS WILL BE AVAILABLE AS REQUESTED BY THE GOP. THE DIRECT FINANCING OF CONTRACEPTIVES BY THE U.S. IS NOT CONSIDERED NECESSARY IN PORTUGAL UNLIKE THE SITUATION IN POORER COUNTRIES WITH MORE SERIOUS POPULATION GROWTH PROBLEMS.

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7. WHILE OPPOSITION TO CONTRACEPTION PROGRAMS IS NOT ADAMANT, THIS IS STILL A FIELD IN OVERWHELMINGLY CATHOLIC AND TRADITIONAL PORTUGAL WHERE THE U.S. BEST RESPONDS TO CLEAR REQUESTS BY THE GOP RATHER THAN RAKES A LEAD.

8. IN SUMMARY, WE ARE CONTINUING PRINCIPALLY THROUGH OUT AID PROGRAM A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS ON THE FOOD PRODUCTION/POPULATION GROWTH PROBLEM AND ARE USING AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT IN PART BY THOSE DISCUSSIONS. IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT WE CONTINUE TO HAVE ADEQUATE RESOURCES AVAILABLE, PARTICULARLY PL 480, TO ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST GOP EFFORTS IN THIS AREA. BECAUSE OF MY RELATIVE NEWNESS TO PORTUGAL, I HAVE NOT YET PERSONALLY DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE WITH GOP. HOWEVER, I PLAN TO RAISE IT AS APPROPRIATE IN THE CONTEXT OF MY GENERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH PORTUGUESE LEADERS ON THEIR OVERALL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.
BLOOMFIELD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POPULATION, PRODUCTION, AMBASSADORS, FOODS, BRIEFING MATERIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LISBON04048
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780229-1083
Format: TEL
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197806108/aaaadopp.tel
Line Count: 202
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ea9ac97d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 107370
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2163256
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL PROBLEMS - POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION
TAGS: SPOP, US, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ea9ac97d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014